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*Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG*

## **QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Response by the Cabinet Member:

The data and feedback from the 2024/2025 Powys County Council budget survey, helps us shape what the Council could look like in the future. The results of the survey were considered by Cabinet as part of the Budget setting and through Scrutiny committees prior to being presented to Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

Responses received from the people of Powys were considered, alongside an extremely challenging economic climate, where high inflation and increased demand for our services continue to create additional pressures on the council's finances for next and future years. The Welsh Government funding settlement for 2024/2025 reported an increase of £7,013 million, which equates to 3.1% for 2024/2025 (far below the level needed to meet the Council's increased costs). Significant cost reductions and savings have had to be considered with £10.653 million removed from the budget next year (equates to an additional 10.8% increase on Council Tax).

In proposing the 7.5% Council Tax increase, careful consideration was given to the affordability for the people of Powys, in light of the continuing cost of living crisis, together with the ongoing need to meet increasing demand for specific services and inescapable cost pressures for local services which people rely. It is widely accepted that the increase may be difficult for some of the people of Powys, particularly the impact that the increase will have on the most socio-economically disadvantaged across the county. However the impact of this has been carefully balanced with the provision of crucial services provided by the council, which resulted in the this decision. It is important to note that a considerable number of lower income households are able to receive support and more than 52% of Powys households are already eligible via various benefits such as council tax discounts, winter fuel payments, tenancy hardship grants and other schemes.

Engagement with representatives from community groups is currently underway across the county, one of the areas that the engagement focuses on is income and work and the barriers around this topic. Engagement diagram – see attached pdf.

Further engagement will take place during 2024 which will offer residents further opportunity to help us redesign the Council for the future and engagement with Town and Community Councils and partners will be fundamental in developing local, community led solutions and building community resilience.

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# Minute Item 1



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